UNITED
NATIONS

CERD

International Convention on
the Elimination
of all Forms of
Racial Discrimination

Distr.
GENERAL

CERD/C/304/Add.56
10 February 1999

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION
OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
Fifty-third session

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES
PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION

Concluding observations of the Committee on the
Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Cyprus

1. The Committee considered the fourteenth periodic report of Cyprus (CERD/C/299/Add.19), at its 1278th and 1279th meetings, on 4 and 5 August 1998, and, at its 1288th meeting, on 12 August 1998, adopted the following concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the fourteenth periodic report of Cyprus and the opportunity to continue its dialogue with the State party. The Committee also welcomes the submission of the revised version of the State party's core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.28/Rev.1). The Committee notes with appreciation that the report provides detailed answers to concerns expressed and recommendations made by the Committee in its concluding observations following the consideration of the thirteenth periodic report of the State party (see A/50/18, paras. 64-76). It further expresses its appreciation for the frank and constructive dialogue with the delegation and for the additional information and comprehensive answers given orally to the wide range of questions asked by its members.

B. Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Convention

3. The Committee reiterates its grave concern at the lengthy occupation of 37 per cent of the territory of Cyprus by Turkish forces and the continued division of the country, and that the Government is still prevented, by the use of force, from implementing the provisions of the Convention in the occupied part of the country since the invasion in 1974. The Committee further wishes to reiterate that the continuing artificial division of the country has adversely affected efforts to reduce tension among the various ethnic and religious communities which comprise the population.

C. Positive aspects

4. With regard to the implementation of article 2 of the Convention, it is noted with satisfaction that the State party has undertaken measures for the preparation of a bill for the protection of refugees, which would protect the rights of refugees and displaced persons regardless of their ethnic origin.

5. The amendment to the procedure for acquiring Cypriot citizenship, by which Cypriot nationality is now granted to all children regardless of whether the father or the mother is a Cypriot citizen, is also welcomed.

6. It is noted with appreciation that the State party has undertaken steps for the implementation of the Committee's recommendations regarding the introduction of amendments to Law II (III) of 1992. It also noted with satisfaction that the proposed amendments to this law include the penalization of the expression of racist ideas through electronic media.

7. With respect to the implementation of article 7 of the Convention, the efforts and initiatives of Cyprus in the field of education are welcomed, especially the establishment of language programmes for children of immigrant families and minority groups. The establishment of official subsidies for children belonging to minority communities and the inclusion of human rights in the school curricula are also welcomed. The holding of training programmes for civil servants on the provisions of the Convention is noted with satisfaction.

8. The Committee notes with appreciation that the State party has taken into consideration the Committee's general recommendation XVII (42) of 19 March 1993 for the establishment of national institutions to facilitate the implementation of the Convention, and the intention of the Government of Cyprus to establish a National Institution for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

9. The Committee welcomes the fact that the State party has ratified, by Law 6 (III) of 1995, the amendment to article 8, paragraph 6, of the Convention.

D. Principal subjects of concern

10. Concern is expressed at the insufficient information on the demographic composition of the occupied part of Cyprus, due to the fact that the State

party is still prevented by the Turkish army from undertaking any census or other relevant data collection on the whole of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus.

11. Although the Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to disseminate information with regard to the Convention, it is still concerned that members of the public may not be sufficiently aware of the protection against racial discrimination provided by the Convention. In this connection, the lack of information on complaints concerning racially motivated offences, other than complaints lodged by foreign housemaids, as well as the absence of lawsuits in courts claiming racial discrimination, and of communications filed with the Committee under article 14 of the Convention, may indicate that awareness of the Convention is not high among judges, lawyers and the public at large.

E. Suggestions and recommendations

12. The Committee recommends that information be provided by the State party on the enactment of legislation for the protection of refugees (Refugee Bill) and the proposed amendments to Law II (III) of 1992.

13. The Committee requests the State party to provide information in its next periodic report on the implementation of recommendations made by the Commissioner for Administration (the Ombudsman) to remedy the procedure for employment of foreign housemaids in Cyprus.

14. Emphasizing the role of the justice system in the elimination of racial discrimination, the Committee requests the State party to consider measures for improving awareness of the Convention and associated legal and administrative remedies, and that lawyers and administrators be supplied with information on the Convention and on available remedies.

15. The Committee suggests that the Government of Cyprus may wish to avail itself of any advice and assistance which may be rendered by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with regard to the Government's initiative to establish a national human rights institution.

16. The Committee requests the State party to give wide publicity in its territory to the fourteenth report submitted to the Committee, to the present concluding observations as well as to the possibilities of making use of the procedure provided for in article 14 of the Convention.

17. The Committee recommends that the State party's next periodic report, due on 4 January 1998, be an updating report and that it address all the points raised in these concluding observations and during the consideration of the report.